

Central Intelligence Agency



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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

12 August 1983

Chad: Potential Successors to Habre*Summary*

2, 5 If Chadian President Hissein Habre were to be killed in battle or die in an accident, his two most likely successors would be his Minister of Internal Affairs and Security, Taher Guinassou, or his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Idriss Miskine. We believe Guinassou has the edge over Miskine. Neither these two men--nor the handful of other potential successors--has Habre's leadership abilities, however, and would probably be unable to hold together the fragile government now in N'Djamena

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2, 4 Chadian President Habre has no formally designated successor. In the event he were to die in battle or accidentally--as opposed to being killed in an unforeseen coup--the US Embassy believes the two most likely successors to Habre would be Taher Guinassou, the Minister of Internal Affairs and Security, or Idriss Miskine, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Both are Muslims from northern and central Chad and would therefore be acceptable to other members of Habre's government, which is dominated by members of the northern-based Tubou ethnic group. No

This memorandum was prepared by [] West Africa Branch, Africa Division, Office of African and Latin American Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and should be directed to the Chief, Africa Division,

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non-Muslim southerner would stand a chance, in our view, of taking over as head of the government now in N'Djamena. [REDACTED]

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3 We believe Guinassou probably has the edge over Miskine, but neither man has Habre's charisma, shrewdness, or leadership abilities, and we doubt that either would be able to hold the ethnically fractious country together for long. [REDACTED] there was a split within Habre's armed faction, the Armed Forces of the North (FAN), between Guinassou's supporters and those of Miskine. We view Idriss Deby, the Commander-in-Chief of Habre's Army, and Mahamat Nouri, Habre's former commander at Faya Largeau, as darkhorse candidates to replace Habre only because of their potential support from the military. [REDACTED]

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5 [REDACTED]

4 Following [REDACTED] on Guinassou, Miskine, Deby and Nouri. [REDACTED]

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6 Taher Guinassou: Presently Minister of Internal Affairs and Security, Guinassou also has served as head of the FAN's military general staff and in the office of the FAN presidency in charge of military affairs. Guinassou was wounded during fighting at Faya Largeau in June 1983 and evacuated to N'Djamena, but he has since resumed his official duties. Guinassou reportedly is popular with the government's northern troops and has criticized Habre on occasion. This led Habre to remove Guinassou from his position as head of the FAN military general staff in late 1981 in order to deprive him of a power base and to neutralize his criticism within the FAN Command Council. [REDACTED]

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6 Like Habre, Guinassou is a Muslim northerner, probably from the President's Toubou tribe. The Toubou and related tribes comprise only 5 percent of the population but as fierce desert fighters provide the backbone of Habre's forces. [REDACTED]

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6 Idriss Miskine: Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Miskine is Habre's principal deputy, having been second in command in the FAN since the mid-1970s. He has some formal education and in the mid-1970s was technical director of the Chadian Electric Company. He also has served as Minister of Communications and Transport. He is a member of the Muslim Hadjari tribe from south central Chad, which comprises about 3 percent of the population and is not ethnically related to Habre's northern Toubou. [REDACTED]

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Miskine, like Habre, is interested in promoting reconciliation among all Chadian factions and favors the inclusion of more southerners in the government. In the past, he was reported to be strongly opposed to rapprochement with Libya as long as Tripoli holds the Aozou strip. [redacted]

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1, 4 [redacted]

3 Idriss Deby: Commander-in-Chief of the Chadian National Armed Forces (FANT)--the national army--Deby previously served as FAN chief of staff. He is not highly regarded by the southern factions that support Habre, and Habre himself was recently reported to doubt Deby's loyalty. The southerners believe that Deby typifies the qualities of many of the officers from Habre's FAN--a good guerrilla fighter but incapable of commanding large bodies of troops in regular warfare. Deby is a Muslim from the Zaghawa tribe, which is ethnically related to Habre's Toubou tribe and centered in the Biltine area. He reportedly is in his mid-to-late 20s. [redacted]

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3 Mahamat Nouri: A member of the President's Toubou tribe, Nouri is close to Habre and has acted as his personal emissary on numerous occasions. Nouri has been described as a "notorious tribalist" and one of the leaders of northern hardliners who are opposed to giving southerners more high government positions. He has been very critical of Habre's efforts to allow greater southern participation in the government. [redacted]

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5 [redacted] the 36-year old Nouri may be part of a tribal faction from north central Chad that favors a rapprochement with Libya. We are not certain of his views on this subject, however, and he loyally served as the commander of Habre's forces at Fava Largeau, which fell in early August to attacking Libyan forces. [redacted]

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